



NEWSLETTER APRIL 2016

EUROBODALLA TRIP

Despite careful planning on the part of the committee—the first walk of the year took place during an extended hot spell. Despite high humidity, all agreed the Eurobodalla Botanic Gardens, near Batemans Bay, was a lovely destination. Walks throughout the gardens cater for a variety of abilities and energy levels. Unsurprisingly, we chose paths with good shade coverage—of which there were many.

While there was not a huge array of plants in flower at the beginning of March, many members commented in appreciation of the clear labelling of plants, and the interesting collection of Eucalypts. Interpretive signage throughout the gardens provided helpful insight, increasing appreciation. In the intense heat of the afternoon, I was reminded of the remarkable adaptive characteristics of Eucalypts which helps them to survive the Australian summer—the vertical hang of the leaves which reduces transpiration, the often thick bark which protects the vulnerable heartwood layers beneath, the high oil content of the leaves which causes them to burn intensely and rapidly, thereby protecting the trunk of the tree.



As the gardens celebrate their 30th anniversary, there are many well established trees, as well as many young ones coming through, ensuring continuous renewal.

While there were a fair number of human visitors, it was clear that many creatures had discovered the haven and decided to make it their home. Many of the birds were particularly friendly, two Eastern Yellow Robins showed a keen interest in the group, appearing to tag along—while Rufous fantails and Yellow-tailed cockatoos were some other highlights.

As everyone had arranged to stay overnight in Batemans Bay, we all gathered for sundowners and a meal at the Catalina Golf Club.

A smaller group met the next morning at Bob and Celia's beach house in Murramarang National Park. We began the walk in a typical south coast forest of Blackbutt *Eucalyptus pilularis* and Spotted Gum *Corymbia maculata* towering high above. The canopy was a hive of activity—with Rainbow and Little lorikeets squabbling above. A Bassian thrush also crossed our path, pausing on the footpath long enough for us all to get a good look.

The pounding of the surf and the breeze in the tree tops formed a constant backdrop through the morning.

Exploring Dark Beach, named after the shade of tiny pebbles which formed the shorefront, we were at the southernmost point of the Sydney Basin.

As we headed out towards the headland at Flat Rock, the shape of the forest changed. The spotted gums became more twisted and gnarled, creating fantastic shapes, like a haunted wood. This was yet another reminder of how a Eucalypt species (or *Corymbia* as it is now known) has adapted to a microclimate where it has been sculpted by wind and sea spray.



As the trees gave way to shrubs, where sunlight reached the ground, a few flowers were noted, including the Hovea photographed. A low growing mystery shrub, which was quite dominant on the headland, was found to be Rusty petals, *Lasiopetalum ferrugineum*.

A refreshing dip in the ocean, followed by a convivial and delicious barbeque rounded off a lovely trip—a very promising start to the walks programme for 2016.



Photo also from Pauline; - notice the pea flower shape, the twining habit - therefore not upright/prostrate etc - and the compound leaves with 3 leaflets; what is it?

OTHER EVENTS

Stephanie and Pauline went to the Canberra ANPS plant sale earlier this month and came away very satisfied with their purchases. A list is now available; email any member of the committee or the garden group to have it sent to you.

The last consignment of plants for the general wetlands planting came from Jen's and was made up of three wattle species - *A. decurrens* (green wattle), *A. parramattensis* (Sydney or Parramatta wattle) and *A. melanoxyton* - about 100 of each of the first two and just under 50 of the latter.

Propagation from cuttings again figured prominently at the propagation morning March 19 at Jen's. Among the species used were *Grevillea confertifolia*, *G. arenaria*, various *Eremophila* species, a prostrate *Correa* which may have arisen spontaneously in Jen's garden, *G. juniperina* and *Persoonia microphylla* - both prostrate from the Windellama area; also the upright *Conospermum taxifolium*.

Diana (Moran) has contacted me about the costs to the Bungonia Trust (?) of propagating plants on a list submitted towards the end of last year. Once the list is firmed up and the Trust is happy with the sources of our propagating material, the road ahead should be clear. This project is dwarfed by our wetlands propagation and I would be confident we can be involved.

Members will be aware of the APS Strategic Plan that is aimed at promoting growth in the organisation. Bob has emailed re the visit by Merle Thompson on Friday April 8 and details of the meeting. I think the PowerPoint presentation had been sent out earlier. Any submissions would be very welcome - whether or not you can attend; it would be very valuable for the state committee to know the things that have attracted people to membership and perhaps equally, things that might be improved..

A table of information about the major groups of pea plants was sent out in the last week or two. It is meant to be a guide to identification. To get the best use out of it, it is necessary to become familiar with those somewhat technical terms (see the accompanying notes) used in describing species. There is no need to remember keys or the information in that table. As long as you can use those terms confidently, you can use a key or

table to identify. As with anything, the more you practise, the better you become.

Also, with regular use of the table, you will notice that just one or two features will often be sufficient to confidently identify some groups. Bob has emailed re the upcoming walk on Sunday. In the reconnaissance trip we did today, there were five of the pea plant groups (from the table) represented in where we walked.

I was surprised that for one group, there were a couple of plants that had a few flowers. That group can be the focus for those who would like to use the table to identify that group. Another group could be also selected as being 'fairly easy'.

The table can be used as often as members want on other trips throughout the year. I would then see that a key for 'local' species of some of the groups could be useful.

With Pauline's picture opposite, there is sufficient information to identify the group to which that specimen belongs

CALENDAR

Thu Mar 31	Potting up and Cuttings - Wetlands and APS
Sun Apr 3	Morton Nat Park (North-west)
Wed Apr 27	Wetlands Garden maintenance
Sat May 7	Oakdale Nature Reserve
Sat Jun 4	Sassafras banksia walk
Sat Jul 2	Workshop: Plant Frost Resistance and Ecology
Sun Aug 7	Wollondilly River walk
Sat Sep 3	Narrangill NR veg. survey with GFN group
Sat Oct 1	West Goulburn Bushland
Sat Nov 5	Windellama Field Day
Wed Nov 23	Wetlands Garden maintenance
Sat Dec 3	Christmas get-together and walk at Tony and Sandra's property at Back Arm



Yellow-breasted robin casting a curious/cautious eye towards the 'invaders' at Eurobodalla?